

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBSSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3215

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: ETRN MRAD EGEN AS
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON AND STATUS OF LEGISLATION
ON SHIPPING

1. IN COURSE OF CALL ON MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, P.J. NIXON
(AT HIS REQUEST) FOLLOWING UP VICE PRESIDENTIAL WORKING
LUNCH AT AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY
HEGINBOTHAM WAS ASKED FOR STATUS OF LEGISLATION ON ASPECTS OF
SHIPPING AS FOLLOWS:

- A) HR 9518 - ON ANTI-REBATING PRACTICES
- B) HR 1422 - RECOGNITION OF CONFERENCE SYSTEMS
- C) HR 9998 - STATE CONTROLLED CARRIER BILL
- D) 52386 - RECIPROCAL AGREEMENT BILL

2. NIXON SAID THAT THERE ARE NO AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
PROBLEMS WITH THESE BILLS IN THE SENSE OF BILATERAL TRADE
ISSUES; RATHER, HIS INTEREST IS BASED ON A DESIRE TO KNOW:
1) THE EFFECTS ON THE PRIVATE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM; 2) THE
PROBABLE EFFECTS ON U.S. SHIPPING; AND, 3) WHETHER OR NOT
THERE IS OR WAS ANY CONSENSUS AMONG THE GROUPS BACKING THE
LEGISLATION.

3. NIXON POINTED OUT THAT IN HIS CAPACITY AS TRANSPORTATION
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MINISTER, HE WILL SOON BE GOING TO THE GOVERNMENT WITH
ASPECTS OF GOA POLICIES WITH RESPECT TO SIMILAR ISSUES
BASED, IN PART, ON A LATE 1977 PARLIAMENTARY REVIEW, AND
HE IS DESIROUS OF KNOWING THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION POSITIONS
ON THESE BILLS. FOR EXAMPLS, HE UNDERSTANDS THAT ALTHOUGH
HR 9518 PASSED THE HOUSE WITH ONLY ONE DISSENTING VOTE, THE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE OPPOSED THE LEGISLATION. HE ALSO NOTED

THAT THERE HAS APPARENTLY BEEN A SHIFT OF U.S. THINKING ON SOME OF THIS LEGISLATION, (A) AND (D) FOR EXAMPLE, AND THAT WHILE JUSTICE SAYS NO, THE FMC SEEMS TO SUPPORT THE LEGISLATION. THE CLOSED CONFERENCE SYSTEM AND STATE CONTROLLED CARRIERS ARE SUBJECTS OF KEEN INTEREST TO HIM AND HIS OVERVIEW OF ISSUES TO BE PUT BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT.

4. NIXON IS INTERESTED IN KNOWING THE ADMINISTRATION'S ASSESSMENT OF THE POSSIBILITY OF THE PASSAGE OF SOME OR ALL OF THIS LEGISLATION THROUGH THE HOUSE AND SENATE, AND THE TIMING OF ANY SUCH MOVES.

5. NIXON WAS INFORMED THAT WE WOULD FIELD HIS QUESTIONS AND ATTEMPT TO GET AS MUCH INFORMATION ON THE STATUS OF THE LEGISLATION AND ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITIONS AND VIEWS AS POSSIBLE IN A TIMELY MANNER.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: REQUEST THE EMBASSY BE PROVIDED WITH AS COMPLETE A SUMMARY AS POSSIBLE ON THE STATUS OF THE LEGISLATION AND ON THE ADMINISTRATION'S VIEWS AND POSITIONS TAKEN. FYI, AS YOU KNOW, NIXON IS CLEARLY AWARE OF AND HAS STRONG VIEWS ON THE FORTHCOMING AVIATION BILATERALS TO NOW TAKE PLACE IN WASHINGTON ON JULY 19TH (STATE 115891.) EMBASSY CLEARING THIS THROUGH THE GOA AND RESPONDING SEPTTEL) AND WHILE NOT CONNECTED TO SHIPPING QUESTION, IT IN OUR INTEREST TO BE AS FORTHCOMING AND PROMPT AS POSSIBLE IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ANSWERING HIS INQUIRIES.
ALSTON

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NNN

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